

become an ordinary and desecrated ingredient in an uncouth phraseology. They are no longer brought directly from the scriptures, by an act of thought and choice in the person who uses them, and with a recollection of their sacred origin; but merely recur to him in the common usage of the diction, into which they have degenerated in the school of divines. They therefore are now in no degree of the nature of quotations, introduced for their special appositeness in the particular instance, as the expressions of an admired and revered human author would be repeated.

This is the kind of biblical phraseology which I could wish to see less employed,—unless it be either more venerable or more lucid than that which I have recommended. We may be allowed to doubt how far such language can be venerable, after considering that it gives not the smallest assurance of striking or elevated thought, since in fact a vast quantity of most inferior writing has appeared in this kind of diction; that it is not *now* actually drawn from the sacred fountains; that the incessant repetition of its phrases in every kind of religious exercise and performance has worn out any solemnity it might ever have had; and that it is the very usual concomitant and sign of a servilely systematic and cramped manner of thinking. It may be considered also, that, from whatever high origin any modes and figures of speech may be drawn, they are reduced, in point of dignity, to the quality of the material with which they become inter-fused; so that if the whole character of the dialect of divines is not adapted to excite veneration, the proportion of it which gives a colour of scripture-phraseology, not standing out distinct from the composition, will have lost the virtue to excite it. And again, let it be considered, that in almost all cases, an attempt to imitate the peculiarity of form in which a venerable object is presented, not only fails to excite veneration, but provokes the contrary sentiment; especially when all things in the form of the venerable model are homogeneous, while the imitation exhibits some features of resemblance incongruously combined with what is mainly and unavoidably of a different cast. A grand ancient edifice, of whatever order, or if it were of a construction peculiar to itself, would be an impressive object; but a modern little one raised in its neighbourhood, of a conformation for the greatest part glaringly vulgar, but with a number of antique